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few if any permanent conversions from one philosophic allegiance to another ever occur in this way, but at least sometimes there takes place an enlargement of vision in which the splendid range and variety of possible viewpoints becomes manifest. Effort after sympathetic envisagement of theories opposed to one's own then ceases to be distasteful, since truth is seen to be something far less simple and easy than an affirmation of one creed or its bare contradiction. Perhaps this recognition of a reality so rich that it generates a multiplicity of doctrines is more than anything else the goal of philosophic convocation.

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### BOOK REVIEWS

*The Principles of Sociology.* EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS. New York: The Century Company. 1920. Pp. xviii + 708.

In a letter published by Professor Ross as a foreword to his *Sin and Society* in 1907, Theodore Roosevelt said: "It is to Justice Holmes that I owed the pleasure and profit of reading your book on Social Control. The Justice spoke of it to me as one of the strongest and most striking presentations of the subject he had ever seen." A writer to whom Justice Holmes and Theodore Roosevelt, not to mention a host of others, acknowledge their debt may justly lay claim to being a power in the intellectual life of America. By all that large public, therefore, who have known Professor Ross through his *Social Control*, *Social Psychology*, *Sin and Society*, *Changing America*, not to mention his *Changing Chinese* and *South of Panama*, this, his latest and most ambitious work, will be gratefully received.

The *Principles of Sociology* is a bulky volume of over seven hundred pages and is evidently intended to be the author's magnum opus. We are told that he was seventeen years in gathering the material through a first-hand study of conditions in China, Russia, South America and the United States while three and one half years were occupied with the actual writing of the book. The book shows those qualities that made for the success of Professor Ross's earlier works, namely, marvellous *Belesenheit*, a wealth of interesting illustrative material amassed by a keen and far-traveled observer, a zeal for facts combined with a phobia for the philosophical and a style which in journalistic vividness hardly attains the level of earlier works such as *Sin and Society*.

William James, in a striking characterization of Herbert Spencer's philosophy, calls "his whole system wooden, as if knocked together out of cracked hemlock boards—and yet the half of England wants to bury him in Westminster Abbey. Why?" Because "the noise of facts resounds through all his chapters" (*Pragmatism*, p. 39f.). Ross like Spencer is factually minded. He is most skilful, in selecting striking, interesting and apposite illustrations. If bare, brutal, unvarnished facts could settle all moot questions Professor Ross would be the most convincing of writers, for he is primarily an eager, earnest, indefatigable and for the most part unprejudiced chronicler of social facts as he sees them. He makes small demand upon either the history of thought or the implications of social evolution for the interpretation of these facts. Groups, social forces, class conflicts, social processes are studied as they present themselves in contemporary society. Professor Ross's "system of sociology," in so far as it can be traced, is composed of generalizations deduced from present-day and for the most part American society. Facts are drawn from the treasure house of the past mainly to illustrate and support this pragmatic interpretation of the present. The result is that Professor Ross is forced to adopt in many instances short-handed not to say dogmatic solutions of moot questions. The absence of any comprehensive principle of interpretation likewise places the writer more or less at the mercy of the welter of factual details. This appears in the tendency to multiply social principles and processes. Part three, which contains two thirds of the book, enumerates some thirty-odd distinct social processes which are discussed in as many chapters.

The book seeks to be comprehensive. Professor Ross tells us that his work contains "a system of sociology" where "system" is used in the philosophical sense of "a way of making some aspect of reality intelligible." The book acquires an ethical flavor when the writer avows "an over-mastering purpose and that is—to better human relations." We detect the note of the social reformer when it is claimed that the book is "intended to help people to arrive at wise decisions as to social policies." The main object of the author however is undoubtedly to present a scientific account of the facts of society. Now all these phases of sociology are important and naturally enlist the interest of students. But from the point of view of methodology the uncritical intermingling of them in a treatise on sociology can hardly further the scientific phase of the subject. In any young and growing science such as sociology it is easy to pass from the rôle of scientist to that of moralist or of social reformer but the effect is confusing. There is possibly a place for

a comprehensive work on sociology that would give us a *synthesis* rather than a *fusion* of these points of view. It is conceivable that a part of such a work could be devoted to the critical and scientific presentation of the facts, another to the theoretical interpretation of these facts either from the metaphysical or the ethical point of view, and still another to suggestions for the social reformer as to the effective combination of fact and ideal in programmes for social betterment. But it is difficult to see how sociology is ever to become a science without keeping clearly in mind the differences between these phases of the subject.

Professor Ross's comprehensive and suggestive book is a *fusion* rather than a *synthesis* of social fact, social theory and social reform. The result is that strict justice is hardly done in the book to either one of these phases of the subject. Let us consider for a moment Ross's place in and his contribution to social theory. This book is the culmination of years of study, embodying the mature conclusions of a scholar of encyclopedic learning and wide experience, yet it adds little or nothing to the theory of society though claiming to be "a system of sociology." There are to be sure abundant evidences that Professor Ross has in the background of his thought, though implicit and fragmentary, the makings of a philosophy of society. But this "system" contains little not found in his contemporaries or predecessors. For Ross, together with the majority of American sociologists, leans towards a voluntaristic conception of society as opposed to the intellectualism of Comte and the biological materialism of Spencer. To be sure earlier writers such as Ward and Giddings were profoundly influenced by Spencer but drew away from him towards a more voluntaristic point of view. Ward, who was the dean of American sociologists, broke with Spencer when he insisted that the state, which to Spencer was anathema, is the brain of society and conceived of sociology as the science dealing primarily with the evolution of the social will. For Giddings society is not, as Spencer asserted, an organism but an organization of a number of individuals who by virtue of their "like-mindedness" embody a common will. But neither Ward nor Giddings quite emancipated themselves from Spencer's influence. Ward, who brought to sociology the training and mental attitude of the paleobotanist, found "almost as many parallels between social and chemical processes as there are between sociology and biology" (*Pure Sociology*, p. 71), while Giddings was wedded to the materialistic monism of Spencer. "All social energy" he tells us, "is transmuted physical energy . . . the original causes of social evolution are the processes of physical equilibration which are seen in the integration of matter and the dissipation of motion"

(Giddings, *Principles of Sociology*, pp. 363f.). A decided impetus towards a more psychological and voluntaristic conception of society was given by Professor Small with his doctrine of interests suggested by Ratzenhofer. To resolve all social forces back into interests, as does Small, to find in interests the clue to social evolution and the key to social problems is to plant sociology firmly upon a psychological and voluntaristic basis. Civilization thus becomes synonymous with socialization, culture a matter of the disciplining of elementary human nature rather than of the conquest of natural forces. Out of these basic "interests" arise the social ends that condition society and social progress becomes a matter of the criticism, the evaluation and the realization of these ends. It is thus a distinct contribution on the part of Professor Small to have introduced the idea of value into sociology and in particular to have stressed the intimate connection between sociology and ethics. Small's contribution suffers however from the vagueness inseparable from the idea of interest, a term too broad, too many-sided and too unscientific to provide a satisfactory basis for the science of sociology, a fact which Small seems to recognize in his later work *The Meaning of Social Science*, where interest is no longer emphasized.

Professor Ross, with his facile pen, his large reading public and his wide learning, is admirably equipped to give final formulation to the drift of sociological thought in this country. He is evidently in sympathy with these voluntaristic and psychological tendencies in American Sociology. "The immediate causes of social phenomena," he says, "are to be sought in human minds . . . nothing is gained by viewing them as a manifestation of cosmic energy" (p. 41). Following McDougall, he finds that the instincts "are the mental forces which maintain and shape all the life of individuals and of societies" (p. 42). The instincts or "original social forces" give rise to "derivative social forces" or "interests." We look in vain in the work however for an elaboration of these suggestions into anything bearing a resemblance to a philosophy of society, nor do we find such a system in Ross's other works. In the discussion of the genesis of society (ch. ix), for example, we would expect some attempt to point out the relation of the social forces of instinct and interest to the differentiation of the social process into groups. (Professor Ellwood has done this in suggestive fashion in his *Sociology in its Psychological Aspects*, Ch. VII, "The Origin of Society"). This Ross does not attempt and thus leaves us without any adequate explanation of the why or the how of the vast proliferations that have characterized the social process from its very inception. Owing to

this distrust of the speculative and theoretical and in spite of the imposing array of terms and principles to describe social phenomena the book often gives the impression that we are still dealing with the impulses, contacts and interests of individuals. The writer fails to impress upon the reader that there is a social as opposed to an individual reality, as is done so skilfully in the works of Cooley. Even in the last part, devoted to "sociological principles," these principles are merely generalizations drawn from the facts. There is little attempt to relate these principles to each other or to a general voluntaristic point of view. The discussion of "Anticipation" (ch. 44), for example, a characterization of the growing purposefulness of society, is obviously related to the teleological implications of the basic social forces of instinct and interest and yet no attempt is made to indicate this relation. The last principle of "Balance" (ch. 47), defined as follows: "In the guidance of society each social element should share according to the intelligence and public spirit of its members *and none should dominate*" (p. 693), is a meaningless truism without further light as to our ideal of what society should be. This unwillingness to think things through even at the risk of landing in philosophy makes the book often tedious reading in spite of its wealth of concrete and piquant details.

Ross's *Principles of Sociology* will hardly take its place as a permanent contribution to social theory, it will hardly be in demand as a compendium of social facts scientifically arranged nor yet as a handbook for the reformer, though philosopher, scientist and reformer may find here both information and inspiration. The book will be prized for its wealth of information, its suggestive insights into phases of social reality and its vivid style. It is a question, however, whether Professor Ross's fame will not be furthered less by this bulky volume than by his earlier more incisive if less ambitious writings such as *Social Control*, *Sin and Society* and *Changing America*. It may be that his most lasting contribution will not be as a social philosopher but rather as the brilliant analyst of a changing world order and the fearless castigator of our modern high-power sinners.

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